ST. PAUL:

A LECTURE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

St. George's Church Young Men's Christian Association

MONTREAL

BY THE

REV. MAURICE S. BALDWIN, M.A.

TRINITY COLLEGE, TORONTO.

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The city of God, says a modern writer, was built at the confluence of three civilizations, namely, those of Judea, Greece and Rome. Separated from each other by the impassable chasm of a most implacable hatred, and allowing every breeze only to fan their hereditary feuds and wrongs, these nations, like three lordly lions who have banished all competitors from the plain, watched each other with sleepless vigilance, each anxious to seize the moments of weakness or security, to free itself from rivalry, and be alone upon the face of the earth. Yet, strange to say, through the Divine interposition, these very elements of war were made to work out the mysterious purposes of God; so that from the very rush and turbulence of their passions were brought forth mighty results, all more or less conducive to the welfare of the infant church, and the propagation of the gospel of peace

Each nation had its striking characteristic,—each its intrinsic excellence and worth. The *Jew*, for instance, had a history and a boast peculiarly his own: he could look back with an exulting and grateful

heart to a long list of mighty dead; from Abraham, that majestic embodiment of faithfulness, who came from the hills of Mesopotamia, to sojourn "a stranger in a strange land," down to the heroic Maccabees, who broke the pride of Syria, and re-consecrated the polluted Temple of the Lord. His heart caught fire as he remembered how Israel left the house of its bondage, and how Egypt awoke to the chase. He trod with Moses the desert, and entered with Joshua the land of promise and of blessing. He followed the footsteps of the victorious David, and listened with rapture and delight to the wisdom of Solomon and the achievements of his reign of peace.

But the pride of the Israelite was in something higher than all these rich associations of the past: he felt that in some peculiar way the Lord was his everlasting light, and his God his glory; that heaven above rather than man beneath had made his nation illustrious. It was not, therefore, in the march of a ferocious conqueror, or the triumphs of a patriot's hand, that the Jew of the age of St. Paul found his highest satisfaction and delight; it was in the abundant manifestations of the Divine power, as seen in the history of his people, and the destruction of his foes. In days gone by, when the proudest minds of Greece and Rome bowed down to a thousand idols, and to deities who were but the impersonations of vice, his fathers, on the slopes of Moriah, or the more distant sanctuaries of Shiloh and of Bethel, wor-

shipped with a reasonable service the only God, the Supreme Arbiter of heaven and earth. Thus had the Jew kept alive the religious element in the world, and fostered, with a mother's care, those holy principles which, in their vigorous manhood, were to sweep from the face of the earth all the mythologies and philosophies of Greece and Rome, and establish on an immovable basis the glory and the gospel of the Son of God.

The long, dark night of heathen barbarism was now fast passing away, and the light—the eternal light of God—which, like the sun in Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Adjalon, had remained spell-bound over the fruitful plains of Palestine, was now about to move and bring in the golden day on the darkness and superstition of Europe.

There was the *Greek*,—he also had his peculiar history and individual influence on the world about him. The wars of Alexander, extensive and truculent as they were, had had a beneficial effect upon society at large. They had spread the language and civilization of intellectual Greece over the dark and barbaric East; they had made the farthest lands acquainted with the modes of thought and superior learning of the most refined and elegant people of the heathen world; and above all, as the Greeks were fond of roaming and of colonization, they had made their language, the most polite and refined of antiquity, the universal medium for the communica-

tion of thought. The venerable Hebrew Scriptures, hoar with the frost of sixteen hundred years, had been translated into the Greek tongue, so that the Greeks from the cities of Athens, Corinth, and Lacedæmon, and even the learned Roman from the banks of the Tiber, might read, side by side with the bearded Rabbi, the glories of Israel and the promised redemption of the suffering world.

And there was the *Roman Empire*. It was now at the zenith of its fame and majesty. The voice of its rulers was supreme from the wall of Hadrian to the confines of Persia; from the forests of Germany to the deserts of Africa. Not yet had ferocious barbarians from the wilds of Scythia and the steppes of Asia ventured down to contend with imperial Rome for the possession of Italy and the mastery of the world. Not yet had the blood of the Scipios and the Gracchi ceased to flow in the veins of Roman knights and citizens. She was still "generally victorious in battle, always successful in war." And like a god, she reigned without a rival, but without a friend,—a high-throned terrible deity, whom it was policy always to propitiate, death to irritate or defy. Not for an idle purpose was it that Rome was now mistress of the world. Her power was absolutely needed to keep together in peace the fierce and intractable nations of the earth. Without it there would have been no means of communication or even of friendly intercourse. Rome did then

what the Gospel did afterwards—she bound together the hostile antagonisms of the age, and compelled them, even against their will, to be at one; the difference between the two being—Rome bound with thongs of iron, the Gospel with bands of love; Rome crushed by its power, the Gospel conquered by the Spirit. The iron broke, but the love remained, and the majesty of Rome at last was found as weakness compared with the religion of Jesus of Nazareth. In fine, Rome was the great constricting power of the earth, Greece gave its language and civilization, while Judæa contributed what no other people could supply, the light and the truth of the Son of God.

Guthrie has remarked that, as in looking over a sheet of water at some distant landscape, we see only the mountains; so in looking over the history of the past, we see only the great men who have made themselves famous, while the mass of mankind who lived with them are forgotten and unknown. And who, we ask, are the great men of the past? Soldiers who have swept over the earth like so many streams of fire, leaving only a desolation and a waste,—statesmen who have built up empires and commonwealths by the mastery of intellect,—crowned kings who have made themselves conspicuous either by their virtues or their vices,—philosophers who have tried in vain to roll back the torrent of iniquity and to do the great impossible, namely, make human nature greater than itself? These all have lived,

flourished, and have died, creatures of the past; their sins, talents and virtues affect us not, and their memories, like the fables of romance, come down the stream of time more to enrich our fancy than to influence our lives. But athwart the distant horizon looms up, like the shoulder of some great mountain, the majestic character of St. Paul—a man born in the past, but living in the present; a man who, though dead long since, speaks to each new-born century with all the fire and eloquence of the past, living, as it were, in the centre of the circle of time, and being equally dear and precious to all; a man who, next to our Saviour Himself, has exercised a greater influence on mankind than any human being; a man who, considered in his own individual character, in his unremitting personal exertions and persuasive writings, is undoubtedly, to use the language of a modern writer, "the grandest spirit of all time." In looking over the vast plain of the Egyptian desert, nothing strikes the beholder as being so startling and inspiring in its effect as the human countenance of the mighty Sphinx, calmly gazing with its eternal eyes on the widespread solitude and universal death that reigns on every side. It is something living amidst a scene painfully still and death-like, something everlasting amid things that have passed away, something that combines in its own solitary grandeur and majesty the three ideas of *humanity*, *solidity*, and

eternity. So, too, with the Apostle Paul. He rises up amid the death and solitude of the past, *human* in his unaffected sympathy and noble unselfishness; *solid* in the noble themes and majestic hopes which he holds out to suffering humanity; and *eternal* in the undying life and fadeless joy he first promulgated to the long-lost Gentile world.

It was by the banks of the Cydnus, and under the shadow of Mount Taurus, in the city of Tarsus—"no mean city,"—that Saul was born. Unacquainted with the particulars of his boyhood, we can only describe him as growing up an intelligent Jewish youth, amid a busy Greek population, and in a city which must have closely resembled the modern Marseilles. Everything about him conspired to fill his mind with a love for gorgeous scenery, and all that was grand and imposing in nature, while deep-seated in his youthful mind, and made more lively from his residence among a foreign population, would be the lessons his father and mother would give him in the rich and marvellous history of his country. We can easily imagine how, in glowing language, they would depict to him the unrivalled glory of the past, the misery of the present, and the hopes of the future. How they would endeavour to instil into his mind a fervent love for the law and an unbounded hatred for idolatry, and above all, an implacable hostility to imperial Rome, and to every creed which interfered with the ancient customs and

modern conceptions of their own peculiar and intolerant religion. Peculiar fascination would there be, too, in the fact that he was of the famous tribe of Benjamin, the most warlike, though the least numerous, of all the families of Jacob. There had been a romantic chivalry, combined with a savage spirit of independence, exhibited by this tribe, which had made it famous. "Side by side with the mighty sons of Ephraim, they trode the desert," while in the long conflict that ensued, their well-known war-cry, "After thee, O! Benjamin," reverberated amid the wild fastnesses of the South, inspiring their friends, but discomfiting their foes. From this same intractable tribe, his great name-sake Saul, the son of Kish, had come; the first to wear the crown and to assume the symbols of royalty in Israel. While Mordecai, who confounded the schemes of the perfidious Haman, and effected the deliverance of his people, was the son of another Kish and another Benjamite. Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord, had ravined as a wolf—in the morning it had devoured the prey, and at night it had divided the spoil. As the youthful Israelite dwelt on the glories of his tribe, and lingered on the scenes where his proud ancestry first obtained renown, he was unconscious of the fact that a mightier spirit than Saul, the son of Kish, or Mordecai, grand-vizier of the boundless realm of Persia, was yet to come, and swell the dyptichs of his favourite tribe. Anointed with no prophet's oil,

but with the influences of the Holy Ghost, he was to overleap the barriers of his tribe and the prejudices of his people, and be a blessing, not only from Dan to Beersheba, but to the wide-spread nations of the Gentile world. He was to do more for his country than the legislature of Moses, the sword of Joshua, the kingdom of David, or the wisdom of Solomon. He was to be Christ's great ambassador to the outside world, and the honoured teacher of this undying truth, that the groaning world about him, however vitiated, however astray, had an indefeasible interest in the religion of Jesus of Nazareth, and in the Gospel of the Son of God.

In order that we may derive as great an advantage as possible from the early history of Saul, let us consider the peculiarities of his education.

It was, in the first place, eminently religious.

The whole training of a Jewish youth was of necessity in the Scriptures. The law of Moses comprised all the intricacies of judicature, and the relations of civil life. The Word of God governed the king upon his throne, and the peasant in his cottage. It gave wisdom to the judge, and condemnation to the prisoner. It regulated not only the services of the Temple, but the principles of trade; and in its desire to glorify God, it forgot not to see that justice was done between man and man. But the parents of Saul infused into his heart a nobler love than that of a mere affection for the letter of

the law. They laboured, no doubt, with many tears, to implant in his soul not the love of God only, but an earnest anxious desire to fulfill, in his daily life, the precepts of the venerated Scriptures. Whether we look upon the youthful Saul as listening with reverence to the instruction of his parents, or in some noisy Jewish school in the crowded Tarsus, hearing the disquisitions of the Rabbi, or, better still, in the holy city of Jerusalem itself, hanging, with enthusiastic admiration, on the words of the great Gamaliel, we see the strict conscientious attention that was paid by his parents to his religious welfare and advancement.

And what, we ask, is education without the ennobling, sanctifying influences of true religion? When we build a ship, we strive to fit her not only for fair winds and sunny skies, but for the pitiless tempest, and the racking storm. We gird her iron sides with giant strength, that when the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls she may outlive the shock and brave the fury of the sea. We would not send a prince across the stormy Atlantic in a small open boat; but how many princes, noble, immortal youths, are sent out on the vast stormy sea of life in no better conveyance than the frail craft of human wisdom and philosophy. And can mere knowledge, however subtle and refined, bind the fierce passions of the heart, and charm the tossings of the troubled mind to rest? Can the training of the schools, without

the divine power of grace, make a youth superior to the god of this world, and to the trooping spirits of evil, to the blandishments of the world, and the depravity of nature? Yet thousands and tens of thousands of the children of our day are brought up educated and refined, as if the world which they were to inhabit were an Eden, and the powers of darkness but a myth. To divorce religion from education is to separate what God has indissolubly joined together, and to confide to a cruel stepmother the care of immortal youth No strength will she give them to fight the good fight of faith, and to overcome in the day of temptation; and while they may grow up proficient in human knowledge, they will be equally deficient in divine, and, therefore, like a rudderless ship in the trough of the sea, they must be carried by the violence of the storm till they are cast upon the rocky shore, or sunk beneath the wave. We may remark, also, that St. Paul's parents were *consistent;* they did not send their boy to a Greek school to be taught the precepts of a pagan philosophy. They sent him to Jerusalem, to Gamaliel, to be brought up in their own faith and persuasion. They were, at least, consistent; and we cannot but contrast their conduct with that of many in our own day, who, knowing, and apparently rejoicing, in the glorious principles and perfect freedom of our Protestant faith, yet deliberately send their children to be brought up in Roman

Catholic schools and convents. One Roman Catholic institution in Montreal is crowded with Protestant young ladies, sent from all parts of the country, and though by specious arguments parents may endeavour to justify their conduct, yet they must remember that Rome will do all in her power to subvert their faith, and in many cases will succeed. And as they have sown to the wind, they must expect to reap the whirlwind. In old age, when these, their children, should come to their bedside, a comfort and support to them, they will but vex and sadden their declining days by the unblushing statement, that the faith of their fathers was but heresy, and they themselves but hopeless outcasts from the church of Christ.

Another feature in Saul's education was its thoroughly practical nature.

It was a custom among the Jews, says a modern writer, that all boys should learn a trade, and he quotes a passage from Rabbi Judah, in which he says: "He that teacheth not his son a trade, does the same as if he taught him to be a thief." In compliance with this idea, the young Saul was taught the art of tent-making. How long he laboured at this work we know not, but this much we do know, that in after years, when the care of all the churches rested as a mighty incubus on his soul,—when his body was enfeebled with sickness, ill-treatment and old age, his hands—„these hands, as he held them up to the elders of Miletus, minis-

tered to his necessities." In connection with this I cannot but remark that the tendency of our age is to ignore the practical for the theoretical, and to crowd young men into professions rather than business, thus compelling them to enter a life for which, by nature, they are utterly unprepared. "What shall we do with our boy?" ask two anxious parents. "Make him a lawyer," says the father,—"a minister," says the mother; at last a doctor is thought of as a sort of compromise between the two. And for all these professions the aforesaid son is about as suited as a polar bear is to the line of the equator. He will be perfectly miserable in any of them, and what is worse, will make everybody else miserable with whom he comes in contact. An honest, manly trade or business, for which he is eminently fitted, is despised, as being beneath his high Bramah caste, and he is therefore thrust into some learned profession, in which, like a ship in the Doldrums, he lies becalmed, an object of pity rather than of envy. Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, summoned on one occasion the celebrated philosopher and poet Philoxenus, into his presence, and read him one of his pieces of poetry. The philosopher ridiculed it to such an extent that the tyrant became furious, and sent him to prison. After some time Dionysius wrote another composition, and so delighted was he with it, that he sent for the philosopher again, and read it to him, expecting he also would be de-

lighted. When he had finished, he looked earnestly at Philoxenus, expecting some high praise for his effort; but the philosopher only turned to the guards, and with an air of sublime resignation, said, "Carry me back to prison." This is the story of many a lawyer who needs a brief; many a clergyman who lacks a congregation; many a doctor who sighs for patients, and happily cannot get them. The world will not stand them; they cannot do their work, and thus they pine away in poverty, whereas in some honest mercantile business they might shine as stars of the first magnitude.

Another feature in Saul's education was its comprehensiveness.

He was brought up to understand, though not to believe, in all the wonders of Greek and Roman mythologies. He was acquainted with the literature of the outside world. No doubt he had read in the Homeric page the tale of the Trojan war; grown warm as he followed the savage Achilles, panting to meet Hector in the fight. The mysteries of Egypt and of Greece, the history of the past, and the state of the present, were familiar to his mind, so that on casting his eye over the vast heaving world about him, he could see, in one grand panorama, all the kingdoms of the earth, not indeed, lit up with any substantial glory, but wrapt in the gloom of ignorance, superstition and vice. No man can judge of the whole from a part. A Chinese, having never

seen beyond the walls of his own kingdom, has come to the satisfactory conclusion that *his* empire is *the celestial* empire, and that he himself,—yes, he that hard, money-making, chop-stick Chinaman is *a* celestial. Yet, somehow or other, our ideas of heaven and its inhabitants differ materially from what we see of China and the Chinese. The world is full of celestials of this kind :—the fur-clad Exquimaux, feeding on blubber and oil, fancies heaven and its inhabitants may be found near the mouth of the Mackenzie river ; the fiery Indian has found out heaven in the boundless prairies of the West. And in general, every untravelled man has a heavenly idea of his own country ; every bigot an unreasonable attachment to his own creed; every unread man, a stupid idolatry for the customs of his fathers ; while those who only contemplate themselves, their wealth, their beauty, and their influence, and have come to the conclusion that they are celestials, are positively legion in number. Many of these heavenly creatures we pass by as if they were only Chinamen.

No, education to be finished ought to be comprehensive, and to teach us the great truth, that real excellence is no placid lake hidden in the valley of some favoured country, but a broad, majestic river, flowing through many lands, giving life and energy to all.

Where Saul was all the days of our Lord's public ministry, it is impossible to say ; but we may suppose

that after his studies with Gamaliel, he returned to Tarsus, and did not come back to Jerusalem until after the day of Pentecost, when the infant church had been formed, and persecution had begun. He was now a fiery enthusiast, conscientious in the extreme—indeed, as one has well said, "His conscientiousness was the continuous thread which ran through both his converted and unconverted life." Above all, the one innocent object of his most implacable hatred was the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Him he hated with all the intensity of an intense nature. He looked on Him as a huge imposter, who not only arrogated to Himself the awful name of Jehovah, but had attacked with unsparing vehemence, that very party to which Saul belonged. "Verily," said he, "I thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth: many of the saints did I shut up in prison, and I punished them oft in every synogogue, and compelled them to blaspheme." Breathing fury, and with wrath depicted on his countenance, we see him stand amid the excited Sanhedrim, while the protomartyr Stephen pleads, with matchless eloquence, for the glorious Gospel, and infant church of the Son of God. Calmly, and with the dignity of a Christian man, the holy Stephen recounts the history of the past, lingers on the page of prophecy, and endeavours, by the cogent arguments of reason, to convince the stubborn minds of his hearers. At last, seeing only

a smile of contemptuous derision on the face of his auditory, he bursts into the passionate exclamation, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do alway resist the Holy Ghost." It was enough; they gnashed on him with their teeth, and fiercest among the fierce was Saul, mad for the blood of the Evangelist. With the fury of the multitude rose the calm sublimity of Stephen. Lifting up his eyes, he saw heaven opened, and Jesus standing, pleading for him at the right hand of God. They stop their ears,—they rush upon him, hurry him out of the city, and commence their work of death. Death did I say? Stephen did not die—he fell asleep They slew the body, but set free the soul; and death to him was but the breaking of the cage in which his spirit was confined; for, set at liberty, it rose and winged its noiseless flight to the bosom of its Father and its God. It was a mighty victory for the dead; they could stone his body, but they could not ruffle his spirit. Amidst the crashing of the stones he knelt down and prayed—"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." And there were fierce eyes flashing on him beneath, and calm eyes looking down upon him from above; and he prayed for those who slew him, and his prayer was heard; and the young man at whose feet the witnesses laid down their clothes was written that day among the living. It was the reward of constancy, and as it was the sublimest prayer that man could utter, it was the

mightiest answer that God could give. St. Stephen was a noble type of that great army of martyrs whose members upheld the truth of Jesus from the days of Nero to the reign of Diocletian—of all those men who, like Jerome of Prague, and Huss of Bohemia, preferred the testimony of a good conscience to the praise of men—of all those who in every age and every nation suffer for a noble, manly, straightforward confession of the truth, whether it be in the full blaze of public life, or in the quiet and unostentatious circle of one's own family and brotherhood.

It is impossible to say what were the conflicting thoughts that filled the dark mind of Saul as he left the dead body of the saint to imbrue his hands in other blood, and pursue, still more fiercely, the scattered members of the church. He is now on his way to Damascus, the most ancient city of the world. Here it was that Abraham tarried on his way to the promised land. Here dwelt the humbled Benhadad, the treacherous Hazael, and the leprous Naaman. Here, too, flowed Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, "better than all the waters of Israel." It was noonday. The sun was beating fiercely down. "The birds were silent in the trees." Damascus, in her queenly beauty, lay before him, when suddenly a flash from heaven laid the persecutor in the dust. There was a voice, the voice of the Lord, —and that a mighty voice,—an awful pause,—a

mighty conversion. And then a poor blind penitent—an object of pity rather than of fear—enters the city, not as a foe, but as a friend.

The conversion of Saul should be understood aright. It was not the making a wordly man devout—he was devout before—but it was the turning a mighty river of earnestness into the right channel. Had he been left alone he would have become fiercer and still more gloomy in his bigotry. His name would have come to posterity in the same catalogue with these of Nero and Diocl tian, with Ferdinand of Spain, with the ferocious Montfort, and with the tigress Catherine—the blood-stained niece of Clement VII. What Saul had received was *light*, and what every man on earth needs is the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The fanatic Mahometan, brandishing his scimeter and threatening death to his foes, is sincere; what he needs is light; and the poor blind Romanist, bowing to his countless saints, and yielding his reason to the will of others, is perfectly in earnest; he means the best, and believes in all he says and does; but still he needs the light of God, and that light will make him not more devout, but more Scriptural, more reasonable, more pure. Had the Apostle Paul been left alone, like a stream of fire he would have swept over the earth, devastating the church, and carrying misery in his path; but changed by the grace of God, he became like a broad benignant river, a blessing,

rich as well as lasting, to all ages and to all lands.

Converted, illuminated, and made an Apostle by the grace of God, Paul stands before us as the very embodiment of earnestness, and the especial minister of Christ to the Gentiles.

In order to study Paul in his new character of an *Apostle*, we will consider, first, *his conduct among his own people, the Jews.*

He was a *patriot* in the truest and noblest sense. He had deserved their praise: he received only their hatred; but neither persecution, nor the rejection of his message, nor the lapse of time could alienate that noble heart from its loyalty, nor quench the love that bound him to his people Israel. Defamed, beaten, imprisoned, with a nobility that seldom finds a parellel, he says, "I have not aught to accuse my nation of." And then he calls God to witness, "I say the truth in Christ; I lie not that I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

We cannot help contrasting this with the flimsy, spurious patriotism of multitudes in our own day. How many, for instance, have we seen leaving England, where, perhaps, they were treated better than they deserved, and coming to this continent, commence bitterly to inveigh against her in a foreign country and under a foreign flag. The deeper our Christianity, the truer our patriotism. And as no

ties are so sacred, and no bonds so firm, as those which bind a holy family on earth together, so no political compacts are so sure, or no obligations so perpetual as those which come at the holy instance of religion. And these, and these alone, can bind together the distant portions of the British empire with that firmness and solidity absolutely requisite in a world of vicissitude and war.

He was an ambitious Christian.

Most people have an idea that all ambition is wrong. It is wrong when the object is the exaltation of self, but absolutely necessary when our object is to serve God, and to fulfill our duty to man. There are some people who seem to think that all difficulties and hardships were made, like mountain tops, for scenery and not for trial. If they happen to have been born in the valley they will live in the valley, and what is worse, die in the valley, too. Ambition! we would that we saw a little more of it in the young men and young women of our day. What would not a little ambition do for the trooping crowd of empty-headed, listless idlers who mingle in our modern society? Contentment, whose robes always cover the eyes, sits on their countenance and hinders them from making any improvement; whereas if they would but arouse themselves, and light a few candles in their stumbling dark garrets, they would not only see a little better themselves, but give others a possibility of profiting by them. St. Paul

was ambitious. He longed, not to be first to govern, but first to serve his fellow-creatures: to spend and to be spent for man. Ambition he had, but it made him the first and the greatest spirit of his age. It taught him to be humble after his ascent to heaven, and to be exalted after his imprisonment in the dungeons of Philippi. It made him, not the flatterer, but the stern rebuker of kings; while in his obedience to God, he emulated the prophets of the past, and competed even with the angels themselves in his unwearying service of love. Ambition! Yes, it was the holy chastened desire to be first in the praise of God, to outstrip the world in the mighty race, and before the great cloud of witnesses, to reach the goal ahead of all mankind. It was ambition, kindled by the Holy Ghost, filling his soul, enlarging his mind, and urging him on to win the noblest crown ever placed on the brow of man.

St. Paul's constancy ought also to be noticed.

He stood alone at Athens. High over the majestic Parthenon glittered the form of Minerva Promachus. Around him stood the sculptured deities of heroic Greece. Philosophers, poets, statesmen, orators and priests, all bent the knee to some imaginary god or tutelary hero. No heart was friendly Yet, alone as he was, he rose, and in the midst of that most idolatrous people, and with all their deities gazing down upon him, he preached "the unknown God." Now was the time to waver when all the seductions

of Grecian art were round about him; but his voice became only the more clear, and his heart more warm as he pleaded for Christ, and through Him the resurrection of the dead. He did not apparently succeed; but *he* had preached, if *Athens* had not believed, and the record of his constancy was on high. Be steadfast to your principles, not only in prosperity, but in the face of all opposition and difficulty. Remember that principle is meant, like the breast-plate of the warrior, for the shock of battle rather than for the parade of peace. Whereever the Apostle was, he was the same. What he taught in Jerusalem, he upheld on Mars Hill; what he said to his faithful friends at Ephesus he proclaimed in the Prætorium of imperial Rome. Constancy such as this we need now. Constancy to the Crown when men talk of revolution and of change. Constancy to our Church when men would burden it with forms, and pollute it with errors. Constancy to God when His religion is attacked, His Bible assailed, and His existence grossly denied. Firm, like some rugged barrier that separates two mighty peoples, should we stand, unfailing champions of all that is just and good.

Observe, next, his Christian courtesy.

He stands before Agrippa,—Agrippa, the king. Years had enfeebled his body, but had not quenched the manly vigor of his soul. He was on trial for his life, but death to him was but the passage from

the sombre shades of night to the noontide blaze of glory. He would have preferred to plead for death. Of Christ he speaks with a solemnity and majesty of power that arouses the voluptuous Agrippa, and compels even his enemies to hear. His judge wavers. The intense earnestness of the man, the cogency of his arguments, and the power of his appeal had their effect. "Almost," he says, "thou persuadest me to be a Christian." At these words, rising to the height moral of sublimity, he replies, "I would to God that not only thou, but all here present, were not only almost but altogether such as I am;" and then, lest any should think of his captivity, he adds, lifting up his hands, "except these bonds."

See him in the Mamertine prison at Rome. To-morrow he is to die. The Emperor has appointed it as the day for his death, and the King of Heaven as the day for his crown. He feels that his trial is past and his victory is won. The gates are opening: the voices are welcoming the soldier to his rest. Before him rise the awful, the majestic form of Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It is the same who stopped him at the gates of *Damascus* who now meets him at the gates of *Heaven*. Then He asked Saul to serve, but now has He girded Himself to serve Saul. Sternly the Roman guard watches his prisoner the long night through, lest in some moment of weariness he should escape his grasp. His hand clutches the spear; the fetters

are upon his limbs, while the pale light that steals through the narrow chink shows him all is safe. But the thoughts—the thoughts of that strange prisoner—are far away. All the past rises in solemn retrospection before him, from the day he shouted for the blood of Stephen, down to this very night, when absorbed in prayer and praise, he waits for the coming morn, that on its golden beams his spirit may enter the city of God. No longer is he in a strait between two opinions; the desire to depart, which was far better, was to be gratified. The perils of waters and of robbers,—the perils in the city, and in the wilderness,—the weariness and the painfulness,—the fastings oft,—the cold and nakedness—are past, and now are to come the rest, the joy, the glory, and the crown. The morning at last broke—the day on which he was *ready* to be offered up,—and the time when his departure was at hand. Gladly he follows his executioners on their sad but triumphal journey. Along the Ostian way the procession moved. As he passed out of the mighty city thousands must have met him; but no one cares to notice him. Roman merchants, hurrying to their marts of commerce; Greeks, from the fallen cities of Athens and of Sparta; Egyptians, from the banks of the reedy Nile; dancing-girls, from the voluptuous East; and broken-hearted Israelites, from the land of Immanuel: *all*, no doubt, he met—*they* going to their work, *he* to his rest. At last the procession

comes to a halt. No chariots of fire, or horses of fire, caught up the great Apostle into heaven; he died the common death of all men, but his spirit, free from all clog or chain, rose on high to rest on the bosom of its Father and its God.

> "He sank as sets the morning star, that goes not down
> Behind the darkened West, nor hides obscured
> 'Mid tempests of the sky, but fades away
> Into the pure light of heaven."

St. Paul was great while he lived; he is greater, if possible, now that he is gone. His writings remain to instruct, cheer and exalt mankind. They have proved too deep for the loftiest intellect fully to grasp,—too clear for the feeblest understanding possibly to mistake. They have thrown a full strong light upon that dark untrodden land that lies beyond the sphere of time, and even lit up with a substantial glory the dark valley of the shadow of death. Dying martyrs, wrapped in sheets of fire, have been sustained by their mighty promises, and pillows on which protracted suffering has laid its weary head, have been made soft by the example they exhibited and the comfort which they spake. Princes who would brook no rebuke from the living, have reverently listened while the mighty Apostle has reasoned with them of rightousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Spirits, fierce and intractable, have been tamed to meekness by their power;

while whole peoples have been changed from being the devotees of ignorance, superstition, and vice, to being the free and intelligent worshippers of the only true God. Let us see that not only we ourselves, but the grand old empire to which we belong be built up on the maxims and eternal truths uttered by this great man, and then shall her power and her glory long remain to enlighten and bless the world.